

Message Text

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ACTION AID-05

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FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1366

INFO AMEMBASS ABIDJAN

AMEMBASY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

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E.O .11652: N/A

TAGS:

SUBJECT: AFDROUGHT: MALI AND NIGER FOOD NEEDS

REF: A. STATE 176524; B. COTONOU 1088

PAGOU BOTTLENECK AND ROLE GON CAN PLAY TO AMERLIORATE SITUATION
DICUSSED WITH CAPTAIN ALI SAIBOU, MINISTER OF TRANSPORT
MOUSSA SALA, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COOPERATION MOUNKEILA
AND OTHERS. FOLLOWING EMERGES: 1. ON DAY-TO--DAY TRANSACTIONS GON D
ELEGATES DECISION ON
COMMODITY SHIPMENTS TO OCDN WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF GENERAL
GUIDLELINE ON PRIORITIES.

2. GON IS PREPARED TO COOPERATE ON TRANSIT SHIPMENTS TO MALI
AS IN RECENT CASE OF SHIPMENT OF ICSM TO GAO AND CURRENT EFFORTS
TO MOVE GRAIN TO GAO.

3. ON LARGE SHIPMENTS SUCH AS MOVEMENT OF US SORGHUM TO GAO,
ALI SAIBOU STRESSED THAT SOLUTION TO PORBLEM (AS COTNOU ALSO
POINTED OUT IN REF B), LIES ESSENTIALL Y IN HANDS
OF TRUCKERS WHO ARE FREE AGENTS AND CAN ONLY WITH
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DIFFICULTY BE COERCED INTO ACCEPTING SHIPMENT UNCONGENIAL

TO THEM. ABOUT ONLY SURE WAY THIS CAN BE DONE ACCORDING TO ALI SAIBOU IS BY INSTRUCTING OCDN FOR GIVEN PERIOD OF TIME TO RELEASE ONLY US SORGHUM TO TRUCKERS FOR SHIPMENT TO EXCLUSION OF ALL OTHER COMMODITIES, THEREBY FORCING TRUCKERS ACCEPT THIS BUSINESS GOING WITHOUT ANY BUSINESS. WHILE GON COOPERATING IN TRANSSHIPMENT TO GAO, WE DOUBT GON PREPARED GIVE THIS GRAIN HIGHER PRIORITY THAN ALL OF ITS OWN NEEDS, NOR DO WE ASSUME WASHINGTON WOULD ASK THIS OF NIGER.

4. ACCORDING TO ALI SAIBOU, MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO TACKLE BOTTLENECK IS A) SQUEAKY HINGE IN COTONOU (COTNOU 886) WHICH HE AND OTHER GON LEADERS HAVE USED IN DAHOMEY AND B) USE OF GON TRANSPORT TO MOVE URGENT COMMODITIES. TO EXPEDITE MATTERS IN JUNE ALI SAIBOU SENT SOME 40 TRUCKS FROM OPVN FLEET NORMALLY USED FOR FOOD DISTRIBUTION WITHIN COUNTRY, TO DAHOMEY AND THEY RETURNED WITH HIGH PRIORITY COMMODITIES. ALI SAIBOU SUGGESTED THAT AMALI ADOPT SAME TACTICE. HE RECALLED THAT GOM HAD SENT 30-TON TRUCKS TO NIGER EARLY THIS YEAR TO MOVE TOUAREG REFUGEES BACK TO MALI. EFFECTIVE WAY TO BREAK BOTTLENECK IN PARAKOU AND GET TGRAIN TO GAO WOULD BE FOR CONVOY OF MALI TRUCKS TO LIFT SORGHUM FROM PARAKOU. ALI SAIBOU SAID GON COULD BE COUNTED ON TO COOPERATE INSURING SMOOTH TRANSIT OF THIS OPERATION. HE ADDED IT WAS IN NIGER'S INTEREST TO GET GRAIN TO 6TH REGION AS NOMADS WERE COMING ACROSS BORDER FROM AALI AND EXCHANGING CATTLE FOR GRAIN WHICH THEY WERE TAKING BACK WITH THEM. THIS WAS CONTRIBUTING TO DRAWDOWN IN GARIN STOCKS IN NORTHWEST NIGER.

5. REGARDING TRUCKING AVAILABILITY IN NIAMEY (PARA 2 REF A) THIS AS POINTED OUT IN REF B DEPENDS ON PROFITABILITY OF HAUL AND GAO UNFORTUNATELY IS NOT CONSIDERED ATTRACTIVE MONEY MAKER.

6. MOUNKEILA ALSO SUGGESTED GOM CONSIDER ASSIGNING EXPEDITER TO WORK WITH OCDN IN COTONOU AND PARAKOU IN SAME MANNER AS WE AND OSRO HAVE DONE. HE COULD HELP RESOLVE TRUCKERS' DOUBTS AND HIS PRESENCE SHOULD HELP EXPEDITE SHIPMENTS. MOUNKEILA SAID GON WOULD COOPERATE FULLY WITH SUCH MALIAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OFFICIALS AND WOULD INSTRUCT OCDN ACCORDINGLY.

7. WHATEVER SUCCESS OCDN PARAKOU HAS IN NEXT FEW WEEKS, WE SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR UNEVEN RESULTS BECAUSE OF CONSTANTLY CHANGING ROAD CONDITIONS AT THIS TIME OF YEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, AS RESULT OF HEAVY RAINS JULY 26, BRIDGE BETWEEN DOSSO AND NIAMEY HAS WASHED OUT THUS CUTTING NIGER'S LINK WITH SOUTH. REPAIRS ARE UNDERWAY BUT LAREGE

TRUCKS ARE BEING HELD UP FOR TIME BEING.

8. FOR COTNOU: WHATEVER EMERGES FROM THIS EXERCISE,
WE ALL KNOW MUCH MORE ABOUT TRUCKING BUSINESS. WE FOUND
REF B USEFUL CLARIFICATION ON HOW BUSINESS AT
PARAKOU CANDLED AND THIS HAS HELPED IN OUR DISCUSSIONS
WITH GON.HECK

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